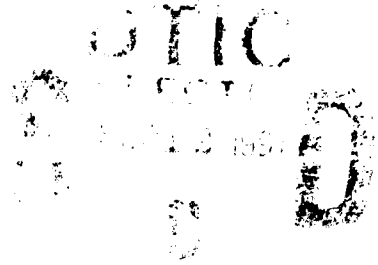

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, Rhode Island

SEALIFT, SEALIFT IMPERATIVES AND THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

by

T. D. Glass
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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: T. D. Glass CDR USN

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The U.S. merchant marine is absolutely critical to the ability of the services to project force globally, and it is in serious trouble. Contained within its history, the economic and cultural structure in which it operates, and its commercial and defense organizational lines are imperatives, or absolutes, with which the strategist/operational commander/planner must be familiar and upon which he must base decision which will affect how U.S. POWER will be projected in the future. It is postulated that 1) strategic sealift can no longer depend on the merchant marine to supply or man the vessels needed in a crisis; thus, foreign flag vessels must be used more willingly and the Naval Reserve should supply manpower to the organic fleet; 2) that defense sealift needs one master, USTRANSCOM; and

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Abstract of
SEALIFT, SEALIFT IMPERATIVES AND THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

The U.S. merchant marine is absolutely critical to the ability of the services to project force globally, and it is in serious trouble. Contained within its history, the economic and cultural structure in which it operates, and its commercial and defense organizational lines are imperatives, or absolutes, with which the strategist/operational commander/planner must be familiar and upon which he must base decisions which will affect how U.S. power will be projected in the future.

It is postulated that 1) strategic sealift can no longer depend on the merchant marine to supply or man the vessels needed in a crisis; thus, foreign flag vessels must be used more willingly and the Naval Reserve should supply manpower to the organic fleet; 2) that defense sealift needs one master, USTRANSCOM; and 3) that, in the likeliest future conflict scenarios, we will have sufficient sealift if we plan properly now.

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Chapter 1

IF THE UNITED STATES IS A MARITIME NATION, WHY DOESN'T IT HAVE A MERCHANT MARINE?

> "Our nation and our merchant marine have pursued sealift with relentless apathy."[1]

It is generally understood that the U.S. merchant marine is in extremis. And because the industry supplies the overwhelming bulk of ships and crews in its defense strategic sealift role, its creeping morbidity clearly has implications for the deployment and sustainment of our military forces during a crisis.

What is less well understood is that the current state of the industry, and its utility as the "fourth arm of defense", is merely an historical reprise of its general condition over the past 150 years. There are three major reasons this is so.

The Historical/Legislative Imperative

From the War of 1812 to the Civil War, the U.S. merchant marine was a world class enterprise. Its main competitor, Great Britain, had grown complacent, content to enjoy the lucrative trade within the Empire. "For more than two centuries the same ponderous, slow frigates, armed like men-of-war, flying the coachwhip pennant of the Royal Navy, plowed through the ocean to the Orient and back over the same course".[2]

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[1] Vadm Kent Carroll, quoted in Association of the United States Army Special Report, Strategic Mobility: Getting There is the Big Problem, (Washington: 1989), p.12.

[2] The Editors of Fortune, Our Ships:An Analysis of the United States Merchant Marine, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 92.

Meanwhile, American merchants put to sea in the Atlantic in smaller, faster passenger and cargo vessels, and were not particularly fussy about where they contracted for trade so long as the profit margin was acceptable.

> The years from 1818 to 1838 were the heyday of the sailing packets. They carried most of the fine freight, cabin passengers, specie, mail, and news back and forth across the Atlantic . . . [3]

On the other side of the world, the era of the "wings on the ocean", the Yankee clippers, was launched. During this fleeting period:

> . . . the U.S. was . . . the first seafaring nation in the world - more enterprising than even Great Britain . . . the cream of the world's cargoes traveled in American ships. The U.S. handled as much as 90 per cent of its own foreign trade during some of those years, and a substantial part of the trade between other nations as well. American vessels were the swiftest, the newest, the most luxurious afloat, American seamen were famous for their daring and efficiency.[4]

The Civil War was the watershed for the U.S. merchant marine. When several hundreds of thousands of tons of commercial shipping were lost to men-of-war, traders, both North and South, reflagged their vessels with neutral countries to keep from being sunk. Insurance rates soared. The terrible bloodbath which ultimately forged a stronger union more immediately broke its financial back. America turned inward to reconstruction and

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[3] James M. Morris, Our Maritime Heritage:Maritime Developments and Their Impact on American Life, (Washington: University Press of America, 1979), p. 156.

[4] The Editors of Fortune, p. 90.

pioneering a bridge across the continent. Elsewhere:

> . . . important changes were taking place in ship construction. Vessels were being built of iron and propelled by steam, supplanting the wooden hulls driven by wind and sail. Foreign shipbuilders, who had made rapid progress in technical developments and improvements while the Civil War was being fought, gained further advantages from lower labor, material, and other costs, compared with similar costs in the United States. The lag in American capability to bend iron sheets into large shapes to construct hulls in domestic shipyards also gave foreign shipyards superiority over their American counterparts.
>
> In the 50 years between the Civil War and World War I, the maritime fortunes of the United States reached their lowest point.[5]

The industry could not rouse itself to meet the challenges posed by the Europeans and the Japanese at the turn of the century. Several maritime historians reported in a tone of scandal that the 16 warships of the Great White Fleet which set off for its two-year, round-the-world cruise in 1907 were fueled and provisioned by a covey of foreign flag vessels.

When war broke out in Europe in 1914 and the foreign flags deserted American ports, docks became jammed with outgoing cargo and shipping rates shot up. Congress, somewhat belatedly passed The Shipping Act of 1916.

The net effect of the Act was the construction of 1409[6] oceangoing merchants, most of which were constructed too late to see war service and which became so much excess shipping in the

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[5] Irwin M. Heine, The U.S. Maritime Industry in the National Interest, (Washington: National Maritime Council, distributed by Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1974), p. 116.

[6] Heine, p. 5.

war's aftermath that it took more legislation, The Merchant Marine Act of 1920, to dispose of it.

> . . . [O]nly one year later the postwar shipping boom collapsed as the world's economies readjusted to peacetime conditions . . . [b]efore 1921 had ended, 17 percent of the world's fleets were idled, and the Shipping Board had no choice but to sell off its ships for which there was no employment. They could only be operated at a terrible loss, but they could only be sold at a terrible loss too . . . Dreams of a great American merchant fleet upon the seas of the world had quickly vanished.[7]

There was a significant interest in the merchant marine during the interwar period, and aside from the 1920 law, two others were passed. The first, The Merchant Marine Act of 1928, resulted in little more than a Senate investigation over its administration.

But the second, reflecting President Roosevelt's strong support for revitalizing the merchant marine in the face of events in Europe, saw fruition in a significant piece of legislation, The Merchant Marine Act of 1936. It recognized for the first time the dual commercial and military roles of the industry.

> . . . the United States shall have a merchant marine (a) sufficient to carry its domestic water-borne commerce and a substantial portion of the water-borne export and import foreign commerce of the United States . . . [and] (b) capable of serving as a naval and military auxiliary in

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[7] Morris, p. 213.

time of war or national emergency . . .[8]

Although the Act was hailed as the rebirth of the industry, its net effect was the same as that of its 1916 predecessor. It created a " . . . fantastic explosion in American shipbuilding output, which by 1942 was already launching vessels faster then the U-boats could sink them . . .[9] At war's end, there were 4976 in all, and the nation and the industry had another virtually unsalable and unusable fleet on their hands.[10]

Curiously, during the war itself:

> . . . only 15 percent of the United States' huge 3,500 ship dry cargo fleet was placed in the custody of the armed services; only half of the outbound cargoes carried by the remaining 3,000 freighters assigned to the civilian War Shipping Administration were for direct troop support . . . The necessity for continuing some level of international exchange of civilian goods even under the most severe conditions creates a second defense-related role for the U.S. merchant fleet.[11]

In what was becoming the usual post-war maritime fire sale, 1100 vessels went to U.S. firms, many were sold to allies, and 1400 were relegated to the National Defense Reserve Fleet(NDRF).

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[8] U.S. Laws, Statutes; etc., " An Act to Revise The Laws Relating to the Merchant Marine", 91st Congress, 2nd Sess. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1971), Title 1, Section 101.

[9] Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), p. 353.

[10] Less the 674 vessels of 1000 GRT or over sent to the bottom as the result of enemy action.

[11] Samuel L. Lawrence, United States Merchant Shipping Policies and Politics, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1966), p. 1.

Of course, there were times in the decades after WWII when it was hoped that the industry would bring itself around or be legislated back to life. Certainly, it could always wish for more wars, and in fact the Korean and Viet Nam Wars had the desired, if all too brief, invigorating effect. But even during those years of conflict, speaking specifically to Viet Nam, we get a view of the future as we know it:

> During the peak sealift year of 1967, 527 ships were employed in delivering the dry cargo and petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) required for the war effort. Among these, 318 ships were self-sustaining dry cargo ships and <u>included 73 foreign flag vessels on charter</u> [underlining mine].[12]

In 1970, the Merchant Marine Act was amended, and it was hoped that the combined effect of law and war would propel the industry permanently into economic vitality, but again the net effect was almost entirely ephemeral. From its WWII high, the merchant marine had shrunk to 893 in , and would continue to shrivel to its current and modern all-time nadir of around 420.[13] Only 238 are militarily useful cargo vessels. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) of the Department of Transportation (DoT) forecasts that the total of militarily

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[12] M. Rosenblatt and Son, Inc., <u>The National Defense Relevance of the World's Dry Cargo Contract Fleet</u>, (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce National Technical Information Service, 1982), p. 1-1

[13] Some of which are reflagged Kuwaiti tankers left over from the Tanker War.

useful ships will drop to 119 in 1995, and a scant 35 in 2005.[14]

> By the year 2000 . . . there will be a shortfall of 4383 personnel to man the ships programmed to be in the ready reserve force and the Military Sealift Command reduced operating status, and an additional shortfall of 7,830 merchant seamen to man all of the ships that would be required to meet the projected strategic and economic support requirement, for a total shortfall of 12,213 personnel.[15]

The Congressionally Mandated Mobility Requirements Study(CMMRS), underway currently and due out in Summer/Fall 1991, may revise these figures downward as a result of changing world circumstances, but will still likely speak to deficiencies in the merchant marine.

The "Don't Reach for the Union Label" Imperative

There are compelling reasons for defense to ship American. First, American flag ships and their crews are controlled by the government in time of declared war, and shipping lines participating in the Sealift Readiness Program (SRP) are subject to call in crisis short of war. Thus, the dual issues of trade and strategic sealift can be managed more centrally. Secondly, the theory is that American crews are more reliable under the duress of a war prosecuted by their own nation than foreign crews who are presumed to have a propensity to jump ship rather than go in harm's way in a cause not their own.

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[14] USTRANSCOM Fact Sheet, produced as background for the Congressional testimony of Gen. H. T. Johnson before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 6 Mar 91, undated.

[15] Commission on Merchant Marine and Defense, quoted in Larry Grossman, Slow Going for Fast Sealift, Military Forum, March 1989, p. 52.

There are equally compelling reasons not to "reach for the union label". First, American patriotism does not come cheap.

> In 1920-21, for example, a typical 8,800-ton coal-burning vessel in the American fleet was crewed by forty-eight men at a monthly expense of $6775. A British vessel of the same type needed forty-five men and cost $5019 a month, and a Canadian vessel required only thirty-eight men and expense of $4564 a month. Lowest of all were Japanese vessels of this type, which, while employing fifty-nine men, cost only $4189 for crewing expenses each month . . . The pattern of higher costs experienced during these years . . . has persisted through the 20th century to the enormous disadvantage of the U.S. merchant fleet.[16]

Those who argue that the American cost of business is driven by inordinate expenses imposed by restrictive and ill-conceived legislation and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations are only partially right. The example of cost *differentials* cited above occurred before the passage of much of the truly onerous legislation to which proponents of the "blame it on Congress" theory of decline point.

And the problem continues. As of February 1991, the wages for a U.S. crew of 21 manning a new diesel merchant were, on average, $8500 per day; Japan would man the same vessel with 17, at a cost of $5000 per day; Germany, 19, at $3500 per day; and Panama, 17, at $1900 per day.[17] "Because of our national standard of living, there will always be a limit to U.S. competitiveness with crew costs of developing nations in

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[16] Morris, p. 229.

[17] Maj Gen Walter Kross, USTRANSCOM Point Paper, Comparison of US Flag Versus Foreign Registry Labor Costs, 19 February 1991.

international trade."[18]

The theory of staying power of U.S. crews versus foreign crews was tested in Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM (albeit in recognizably different circumstances than might be encountered in a global confrontation). This issue will be discussed later in more detail, but the upshot is that it simply does not wash.

Strategic Sealift is an Orphan with Many Parents

For all the interest in the merchant marine's defense role, strategic sealift has never found a home where it could receive nurture commensurate with its importance.

The Navy (via the Military Sealift Command-MSC) is the sponsor of Department of Defense (DoD) organic sealift (8 SL-7 fast sealift ships), and the contracting agency for commercial ships which not only ply day-to-day trade for the services but also augment the organic fleet in times of crisis.

The Navy had also been the sponsor of the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF), of which the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) is a subset. While the bulk of the ships in the NDRF have no defense utility (too old, not the right type, outdated propulsion plants), the RRF is composed of 96 ships which are required to be maintained in a state facilitating their breakout in 5, 10 or 20 days, depending on the ship. In October 1988, sponsorship of the NDRF was transferred to MARAD.

The Army is the principle user of strategic sealift, but has

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[18] National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere, Shipping, Shipyards and Sealift: Issues of National Security and Federal Support 1985, (Washington: 1986); p. 14.

little influence over the asset. But its Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC-also a component command of the United States Transportation Command-USTRANSCOM), is responsible for identifying some movement priorities, getting the right ship on berth and providing port management teams.

Congress has enormous impact in terms of funding and prioritization, but this mercurial body has never offered a coherent, cohesive long-range program for either defense or commercial sealift. The present Administration has offered a program, the National Sealift Policy, signed by President Bush in 1990 to revitalize the merchant marine in the same way the National Airlift Policy, signed in 1963, revitalized the airline industry, but it is widely regarded as toothless.

USTRANSCOM, for which MSC is also a component command, is the deployment and sustainment czar for the services, but does not fund or maintain the organic fleet (the Navy funds in war, MARAD funds and maintains in peace), and thus has little impact in this vital area. Nor does USTRANSCOM control sealift research and development funds (the Navy does).

The Marine Corps owns 13 Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS), which are USMC assets until their cargo is discharged, at which time they become common-user assets under the purview of USTRANSCOM, as employed by MSC. Twelve vessels providing a similar prepositioning capability to the other services, the Afloat Prepositioning Force (APF), are contracted by MSC.

This is to say nothing of the merchant marine at large,

which is managed, regulated and administered by a complex web of agencies, including: the Administration (via DoT, MARAD and USCG); freight forwarders; unions by the score; ship and shipyard owners; and port authorities.

In sum, monkeys have more organized and productive relationships with footballs than strategic sealift has with its many sponsors.

Chapter 2

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD: SEALIFT IMPERATIVES AT WAR

Operation DESERT SHIELD was the prism through which sealift's imperatives were focussed with striking clarity. On 10 August 1990, three days after the issuance of the deployment order, USTRANSCOM (via MSC) requested a priority activation of all 17 roll-on/roll-off (RO-RO) ships of the RRF. Thereafter occurred a series of events revealing in their convolution.

> The activation and operation costs [were] financed by funds transferred from MSC to the Maritime Administration. Initially, MARAD advanced funds for MSC from its Vessel Operations Revolving Fund, and this advance has subsequently been reimbursed.[19]

Just one week later, reports of DoD infighting created by parentage issues, surfaced in the New York Times.

> The Army has long complained that the Navy is reluctant to finance sealifts [fast sealift ships], preferring instead to spend money on warships. The Navy has maintained that sealifts are a national responsibility and that the Maritime Administration should be responsible for encouraging the development of commercial ships that could be used during wartime to move materiel.[20]

In the same article, the Administration took its lumps over its apparent failure to execute the will of Congress over fast sealift[21], and one month later, the New York Times again made

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[19] Senate Subcommittee on Merchant Marine, p. 43.

[20] Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Faces Daunting Challenge in Rushing Sizable Force to Mideast", New York Times, 14 August 1990, p. A10.

[21] Ibid.

the point in an editorial. " . . . the Navy doesn't like to buy ships to transport tanks for the Army. So it hasn't bothered to spend all the money Congress appropriated for fast cargo ships."[22]

Meanwhile, Congress met with Vice Admiral Frank Donovan, Commander Military Sealift Command, and Captain Warren Leback, Maritime Administrator (MARAD) in September 1990. It wanted to know why foreign ships were being contracted when the whole of the RRF had not yet been activated and U.S. merchants were still available. In a revealing exchange, sealift's union label and parentage imperatives were validated.

> Mr. HUBBARD. What is the cost of chartering these foreign vessels for Operation DESERT SHIELD?
> Captain LEBACK. I am not privy to that. That is the responsibility of Admiral Donovan or MSC.
> ---
> Admiral DONOVAN. I can provide that information. We average about $10,000 a day to operate one of the foreign charters . . .
> ---
> Mrs. BENTLEY. How much does it cost a day for an RRF vessel?
> Admiral DONOVAN. For an RRF vessel to operate a day?
> Mrs. BENTLEY. Yes.
> Admiral DONOVAN. It is approximately $25,000 to $30,000 per day. This does not include the activation/deactivation cost.

Curiously, the week of the hearings, the Administration reversed its longstanding contention that there was plenty of strategic sealift, and advocated the revitalization of the

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[22] "Deployment Fast, Procurement Hasty", New York Times, 17 October 1990, p. A26.

merchant marine.[23]

October 1990 saw the Senate pass its FY 91 defense appropriations bill, which approved $1 billion to build MPS for the Army. By November, the final figure had dropped to $250 million, Army MPS was out of the picture, and the Navy was directed to perform the unenviable champagne task of " . . . establish[ing] a program to build and operate a fleet of commercially viable and militarily useful fast sealift vessels"[24] on the beer budget it had been allotted.

By January 1991, not a penny had been committed, because the Navy had not requested the money, and it was only in February 1991 that the stonewalling of Congress was ended for the moment when Secretary of the Navy Lawrence Garrett directed the Chief of Naval Operations to " . . . formulate an Operational Requirements (OR) document and an acquisition plan to permit initiation of ship acquisition as soon as possible".[25]

Coincidentally, USTRANSCOM was engaged at this very moment was completing an in-house study of the RRF, which was not a Navy or MARAD directed study, and which was not designed to dovetail

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[23] INSIDE THE NAVY, 24 September, 1990, p. 7.

[24] INSIDE THE NAVY, 5 November 1990, p. 3.

[25] Robert Mottley, "Sealift Ships:What Happens Now?", Marine Log, February 1991, p. 15.

with Navy efforts.

In December, the Navy was accused of bullying MARAD into using the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard to reactivate three of the twenty RRF ships for the European redeployment which had begun in November. MARAD dug in and refused, claiming previous activations at the yard had taken twice as long as expected and cost twice as much.

But MARAD in turn was criticized for maintaining the ships so poorly in the first place, thereby causing the delays. "Some shipyards even report that they ha[d] stopped competing for some contracts because they know that the work could not be properly performed at the cut rate prices that were being offered."[26] DoT passed the buck to Congress, claiming that it had "shortchanged" the appropriations process.[27]

Meanwhile, the staying power of crews in war was being tested. There is evidence of only one foreign flag vessel refusing to enter the Persian Gulf. The reason is not clear, although more money, as opposed to a failure of courage, may have been the issue. Apropos the American crews in Operation DESERT SHIELD:

> . . . the . . . immediate concern is whether they [merchant marine officials] will be able to continue to support the operation in five months, especially if shooting starts. "Once they get back home after that initial voyage, all bets are off," says Teel [Captain David

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[26] Inside the Navy, 24 December 1990, p. 5.

[27] L. Edgar Prina, "Two If By Sea . . . Are We Ready?", Army, December 1990, p. 18.

> Teel, Master, USNS Capella]. "And while seamen as a whole are pretty patriotic in a crisis, I suspect if shooting breaks out a certain percentage will take a hike."[28]

There is only one instance wherein a foreign flag vessel (Japanese) refused to sail with its U.S. military cargo[29], and one in which the U.S. could not reach a satisfactory agreement with a foreign firm when the Request for Proposal went out in August 1990.[30]

This is by no means the complete picture of the sealift effort in Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM, which would take up volumes. But it is a clear indicator that the sealift imperatives were at work, and that they are equally applicable in peace and in war. Throughout the operations, the sentiment most frequently expressed by most knowledgeable sources was that sealift worked this time, but next time was in doubt.

The contention here, however, is that if strategists and operational commanders understand the inescapable implications of the sealift imperatives, accept the limitations they impose and plan with the limitations in mind, sealift can support defense, and the "next time" will not be in doubt . . . just different.

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[28] James Kitfield, "Civilian War", Government Executive, December 1990, p. 19.

[29] INSIDE THE NAVY, 28 January 1991, p. 2

[30] VAdm Frank Donovan, "Statement", U.S. Congress, House Subcommittee on Merchant Marine, Our Nation's Capability to Meet Sealift Requirements Caused by American Deployment to the Persian Gulf, Hearings (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1990), p. 49.

Chapter 3

SEALIFT IMPERATIVES AND THE STRATEGIST/OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

The hard, but not impossible, realities of sealift must become woven inextricably into how the prosecution of war is viewed and planned for, or we will be forever condemned to unrealistic expectations and hasty half-measures which can jeopardize blood and treasure. Getting what we need must take priority over getting what we want, because what we want may not be available or appropriate.

Strategists and operational commanders must take into account the following lessons if we are to succeed on battlefields of the future.

1) The merchant marine cannot be revived under any circumstance, including protracted conventional warfare. Nothing in its history or prospects indicates that the merchant marine will be a viable enterprise at any time in the foreseeable future. No amount of operating or construction subsidies has heretofore checked its decline, and the governmental investment which would be required to build it up and support it over time would be stupefying. No war could revive the construction industry, which at this writing is at seven yards and declining. It is an article of faith that given other more pressing priorities, the U.S. is neither fiscally capable nor intellectually prepared to invest in this terminal "black hole".

USTRANSCOM must be prepared to contract for shipping differently, and Navy/MSC must be prepared to man strategic

sealift vessels differently. First, the dependency on foreign flag vessels must be recognized, and they must be included up front as acceptable carriers of defense goods, without having to pay the presently necessary lip service to the U.S. merchant marine in the form of first opportunity. Immediately available, lowest cost lift should be the driving factor in contracting, without regard to source.

Secondly, Navy, USTRANSCOM, Administration and industry officials have called for the revitalization and reordering of the Merchant Marine Reserve to ensure a qualified pool of mariners in the event of a crisis. But as the merchant marine sinks ever lower into its uncompetitive morass, the number of individuals available to serve in this fashion will likewise sink. Without the larger revitalization of the merchant marine, the merchant marine reserve cannot happen, and we already know what end the merchant marine will meet.

Thus, the Navy will have to consider extraordinary measures to overcome this difficulty. The Naval Reserve, heretofore largely underemployed in positions of superfluity, is precisely the organization which can man both organic and contract vessels, and it can give crews a wartime reliability which cannot otherwise be assured. Weekend and annual drills could be tailored to build or improve necessary skills, team units could be built to support particular vessels, and breakout and sailing exercises of the RRF could include appropriately trained reservists. There is no other pool of manpower available upon which to call.

2) Defense sealift must be managed in a fashion commensurate with its importance. Organizational indifference on the part of the Navy and an inadequate grasp of military exigency on the part of DoT/MARAD have left defense sealift without a willing and capable single-minded parent.

Sealift has never been a traditional Navy mission, despite the number of Navy Secretaries and Chiefs of Naval Operations who have decreed it. Warfighting is the Navy's sole consideration, and it is unrealistic to think that we have seen the end of the diversion of funds to pay for warfighting tools if Navy remains at the sealift helm. It is not that "the Navy doesn't like to buy ships to transport tanks for the Army", but its priorities are in a different place, and defense sealift is poorly served as a result. This is true of its administration of sealift R&D, as well.

With regard to the maintenance of the NDRF (emphasizing its critical RRF subset), MARAD and Congress have been unwitting conspirators in ensuring that the fleet is desultorily maintained and poorly represented in budget and prioritization matters. MARAD simply does not have the credibility in military issues to get the most bang for its buck in Congress, and Congress is subjected to far too many competing voices at appropriation time.

USTRANSCOM is the only body capable of supporting sealift in a manner befitting its importance, and it should have the funding line as a result. As a joint command, USTRANSCOM does not carry service baggage which would interfere with its mission to ensure

that public funds are spent according to the will of Congress. It would have the credibility, as the dedicated military voice speaking to defense sealift issues in context with strategic lift as a whole, that no other body could hope to duplicate. It would conduct the requirements studies[31], in conjunction with the supported CINCs, thereby finally including the supported commanders and diminishing service peculiarities. It would mean fewer monkeys toying with the affection of the football.

The precedent for such an initiative already exists. The Commander in Chief, Special Operations Command, funds special operations because this is an unique defense asset requiring the expertise and single-mindedness of a joint operator. The same can be said for strategic sealift.

3) Given the likeliest scenarios of future conflict, we will have sufficient sealift if we plan properly. Excepting a major global conventional conflagration, for which there may be a sealift shortfall, the U.S. has, or has access to sufficient sealift to meet its needs, because the long-term prognosis for warfare has changed the requirement.[32]

Low intensity conflict, reasonably expected by most experts to be the preferred mode de guerre of the future, has

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[31] In fact, at this writing, USTRANSCOM has completed and briefed to the Joint Staff and the services an RRF Analysis.

[32] CMMRS may be at odds with this thesis, but on the other hand will probably not recognize the sealift imperatives postulated herein and will undoubtedly still set the requirement artificially high based on an unlikely global scenario and self-serving service input.

traditionally been sparing of sealift, since there is far less commitment of heavy forces and the duration of conflict is measured in weeks or months, not years. It has demanded reasonably quick response, and the appropriate response is generally a function of what airlift can deliver.

In this regard, given U.S. interests, the geography of most potential sites of conflict (Central and South America, the Philippines, and the Caribbean basin), and the politically charged aura which surrounds LIC as we know it, light to medium forces inserted by air or MPS will be the predominant choices for rapid response. Grenada and Panama, which used no sealift at all, not Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM, are examples of what the future holds in store.

Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM were aberrations. We cannot expect that we will have the benefit of highly developed ports and air ports of debarkation which were available in Saudi Arabia, nor can we presume the availability of allies in the Middle East or the Philippines. Swift and effective terrorist or military action can eliminate such facilities, and we should generally plan "go-it-alone scenarios in these parts of the world. If we plan for worst case, we cannot rule out the potential diesel submarine threat to shipping.

A combination of airlift and MPS (Marine Corps to be sure, and Army, should that service ever fully acknowledge that the success of this option is applicable to its own doctrine) ensures swift and tailored response without the facilities and time lag

during surge occasioned by sealift.

In this regard, the C-17, the Air Force's inter/intratheater strategic airlifter, is clearly a step in the right direction. Capable of carrying outsize cargo and landing and taking off from short, unimproved airfields, the C-17 is ideally configured for the LIC environment. That airlift is more expensive than sealift and requires exponentially more missions to carry what a ship can carry in one transit must be weighed against the cost of operating and construction differential subsidies, mariner wages and benefits, war risk insurance; etc., over time.

Sustainment is a separate issue, driven by aims of the conflict (how long do we have to stay and what do we have to do to meet the objective?); progress in the field (can we secure ports timely and in what condition is the infrastructure?); and the availability of sealift of all types. Although operational commanders do not delineate political objectives, they must be candid in forewarning their civilian masters that the quantity of available sealift (and ports, potentially) will drive the success of operations requiring it, and that expectations should be adjusted accordingly.

But even if we postulate a large conflict involving heavy forces, it is not written in stone that we inevitably experience a dearth of sealift.

> Some observers have asserted that Operation Desert Shield demonstrates that U.S. sealift assets are inadequate and that the United States needs more sealift, particularly fast sealift. But the issue may not be as clear cut as these assertions suggest. Operation Desert

> Shield has required heavy use of U.S. sealift assets, but the heavy use of an asset in a particular contingency does not by itself demonstrate a shortfall of that asset. It just as easily demonstrates that there is just the right amount of that asset available. That might be particularly true if the contingency in question is one that places the maximum imaginable stress on that asset.[33]

Certainly, a Soviet invasion of Europe would put the lie to the observation above, but we had come to the conclusion at least three years ago (if not longer) that the ten divisions in ten days commitment to NATO was impossible to carry off, even with the sealift capability which then existed. The commitment is a triumph of diplomacy over reality. Should this unlikely scenario occur in 1993, planners will have to dredge up Operation OVERLORD for revision.

The austerity which has impacted every other facet of military procurement and planning is at last affecting strategic sealift in a way which cannot be overcome except by bold new measures and ways of thinking. The U.S. will retain the ability to deploy, employ and sustain its forces abroad, but lift constraints will dictate how much, how fast. This is certainly nothing new, except that the constraints may be more severe, options less certain. If we really believe that wars will be "come as you are" affairs, then we must believe that this is as true of lift as it is of our fighting forces.

The penalty for relying on the merchant marine to somehow

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[33] Ronald O'Rourke, Congressional Research Service, Sealift and Operation Desert Shield, (Washington: 1990), p. 4.

revive and take up its dual commercial and military roles with the same artificially-buoyed vitality that it has in past will be an unconscionable failure to take the steps required immediately to craft a reliable sealift capability from the building blocks already available. We do not need laws and appropriations so much as we need foresighted thinkers who can envision the day when the U.S. is without a merchant marine, and plan accordingly today.

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